

of documented original Tuskegee Airman, United States Air Force Colonel (Retired) Charles E. McGee, to Brigadier General.

McGee was a torchbearer, consistently emphasizing the significance and lasting legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen on the U.S. military and American society. It was the Tuskegee Airmen he said that “right the wrong those that believed Blacks were not able to master sophisticated equipment, that Blacks lacked courage, and that Blacks did not have the wherewithal to fight a determined enemy. It was the Tuskegee Airmen that ended up with a stellar WWII aviation war record and thereby edged the military toward integration and America away from segregation.”

Brigadier General McGee and his late wife, the former Frances E. Nelson of Champaign, Illinois, raised three children, became grandparents of ten and great grandparents of many more. He will be greatly missed; however, his legacy will live on as a source of inspiration for generations to come. I wish retired Air Force Brigadier General Charles E. McGee ‘high flight.’

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. ESTES. Madam Speaker, I was not present for Rollcall vote Nos. 18 through 27.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Rollcall No. 18; NAY on Rollcall No. 19; YEA on Roll Call No. 20; NAY on Roll Call No. 21; NAY on Roll Call No. 22; YEA on Roll Call No. 23; NAY on Roll Call No. 24; NAY on Roll Call No. 25; YEA on Roll Call No. 26; and YEA on Roll Call No. 27.

HONORING KYLA CLAUSSEN AS IOWAN OF THE WEEK

HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Kyla Claussen, disability rights advocate and caregiver, as Iowan of the Week.

Kyla is a tireless advocate and clear voice not just for herself, but for the thousands of Iowans who find themselves waiting for assistance through a Medicaid HCBS waiver. Although Kyla lives with an unknown progressive neuromuscular disease that has impacted her lung capacity, mobility, and speech, that has not sapped an ounce of her compassion and dedication.

Kyla is one of over 17,000 Iowans waiting for a waiver to receive home and community-based care through Medicaid. She brings a unique perspective to an all-too-common problem for Iowans living with a disability. Before requiring assistance herself, Kyla had in fact been a caregiver for over a decade. While Kyla is no longer able to work as a caregiver, I know this hasn't taken away her compassion and drive to make sure everyone—no matter who—can live in their home, their community,

and achieve their fullest. Her unending commitment to others and service to her community, whether as a caregiver or fighter for disability rights, embody the values that make me proud to be an Iowan.

You can find evidence of Kyla's commitment wherever you look. If you ask her friends and fellow advocates at Iowa Upgrade Medicaid, she's been called “the researcher” for her ability to dig into and digest disability laws in Iowa and around the Midwest. And just this past fall, Kyla was able to use her story to call attention to the need for better home and community-based services as part of a roundtable discussion with the White House. I am incredibly proud to see Iowa so well-represented in Kyla, and I am glad that more folks had a chance to hear her story.

But Kyla's story doesn't stop there. Kyla lives in Avoca, Iowa with the kittens she's fostering—she has four right now, but it's been more in the past—and her service dog in training, Ed. Whenever Ed notices that Kyla's breathing has flagged, he's trained to start barking. Then, according to Kyla, her mission becomes getting him to stop. That's a good boy.

I know that our laws have failed in protecting and providing for our disability community. I have heard so many personal stories of how our existing programs are woefully inadequate, unable to address the most basic needs for those who are not able-bodied. Gaps in our local, state, and federal system have mired the disability community with red tape and bureaucracy to receive the most basic level of assistance. The issues facing our friends, family, and neighbors with a disability are profound, and the current systems are antiquated. I am proud to have supported legislation to address these problems, however much of this legislation remains stalled. I will not stop supporting and advocating to ensure we treat those with a disability with respect, humanity, and kindness.

I am humbled by Kyla's ability to use her diagnosis as a springboard for change and her genuine concern for her friends, community, and fellow Iowans always shines through. I am grateful to be able to share her story here in Washington, and I am privileged to be able to celebrate her as Iowan of the Week.

HONORING ALABAMA'S LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our local law enforcement.

Across our country, police officers are under fire. They are being killed, attacked and targeted.

These brave men and women who serve their local communities help keep us safe, but the liberals continue to push to defund the police.

I am sick of it.

President Biden and the left's anti-police policies have led to a crimewave across our nation. Last October, three Alabama police officers were shot in less than 24 hours. Last May, Alabama officers were injured in a shoot-

ing. And last week, an Opelika Police officer was hit by a fleeing suspect.

We are a country of law and order and I implore my colleagues to stand up for those who protect us and back the blue.

THOMAS TERRELL

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the citizens of the Texas-Twenty-Fourth Congressional District, the 2021 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to Thomas Terrell, Captain, United States Marine Corps, of Southlake, Texas for his honorable service in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued dedication to his community.

Mr. Terrell was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1961 and served until 1967. Terrell served several tours in Vietnam, to include at Chu Lai, Dong Ha, Phu Bai, and Quang. At Dong Ha Combat Base in 1967, Terrell and his fellow Marines came under an intense enemy artillery attack, during which Terrell moved three wounded Marines to safety and maneuvered under enemy fire to assess and check upon the welfare of his Marines during the attack. Terrell was awarded the Bronze Star with “V” device denoting valorous actions as well as the Purple Heart.

After leaving the Marine Corps, Mr. Terrell has brought the same love he had for his country and poured it into making his community a better place. Mr. Terrell holds several ministerial roles in local churches, taught for several years at the Happy Hill Christian Academy, and is a member of the Texas Real Estate Commission's Broker-Lawyer Committee.

Mr. Terrell's career is marked with heroism and is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Marine Corps and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SERVICE: TAMMY MEMBREÑO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BARRIO ACTION YOUTH & FAMILY CENTER

HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Ms. Tammy Membreño on the occasion of her 30 years of service as Executive Director of Barrio Action Youth & Family Center.

As an immigrant from El Salvador, Tammy Membreño, has devoted her life to improving the quality of life for youth and their families because she understands the impact of limited economic resources and education on low-income families. During her college years, she began volunteering at Barrio Action and in 1991 she embraced the opportunity to become their Executive Director.

Barrio Action was established to empower young people to succeed both academically

and socially, working with people of all ages, with a special emphasis on helping high-risk and at-risk youth, young adults and their families.

Today, because of Tammy Membreno's persistence and advocacy, the organization has grown from three staff members to one with over twenty-three employees and multiple programs serving over 20,000 children and families in Northeast Los Angeles.

Thanks to Tammy Membreno's vision, Barrio Action has a permanent home in the community of El Sereno. Barrio Action is the only youth and family center in El Sereno, a community of over 54,000 residents.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and celebrating Tammy Membreno.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MEL
MERMELSTEIN

HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reflect on and honor the life of Mel Mermelstein, a survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, later a U.S. immigrant who served our country in the Korean War, a pioneering voice in the legal fight against Holocaust denialism, and a proud champion and teacher of Holocaust education and remembrance.

Mermelstein died January 28, 2022, at his home in Long Beach, California. He was 95. Mermelstein was born in Mukachevo, Czechoslovakia on September 25, 1926. His hometown was later occupied by the Hungarians and is currently part of the Ukraine. Mermelstein was 17 years old in 1944 when the Nazis rounded him up along with other Jews who had been stripped of their homes, denied education and were relegated to ghettos. They were transported by cattle car to the infamous Nazi camp, Auschwitz, in German-occupied Poland.

Mermelstein later recounted in numerous interviews, that upon arrival, his mother who was helping a woman with three or four small children, was immediately ushered to the gas chamber line. His two sisters who had been selected for slave labor, ran to be at their mother's side. They all perished that day in the Nazi death factory. Thereafter, his father and brother were also senselessly murdered by the Nazis, leaving Mel the sole survivor of his immediate family.

During his internment at Auschwitz, Mermelstein was forced by the Nazis to work as slave labor. In January 1945, as Soviet Troops advanced, the Nazis began mass executions and evacuations of prisoners from Auschwitz. Mermelstein was forced to march on foot for three weeks in the bitter snow in what has come to be known as the death marches. After surviving the 155-mile forced march to Gross-Rosen concentration camp, he was packed onto a train and sent to Buchenwald, another Nazi concentration camp.

On April 11, 1945, U.S. forces liberated Mermelstein and the other surviving Jews from Buchenwald. Upon liberation, Mermelstein was 18 years old and weighed 68 pounds. He remained in the camp while the Red Cross offered medical care and aid. After approxi-

mately three months, he returned to Mukachevo. With his entire family murdered and his family home occupied, Mermelstein made a decision to begin a new life in the country that had liberated him from hell.

Mermelstein knew he had an uncle and aunt in New York. Although he did not speak English at the time, Mermelstein immigrated to the U.S. through Ellis Island in 1946, where he eventually became a naturalized citizen. In 1950, Mermelstein was drafted into the U.S. Army. Although he was given the ability to forgo service, he proudly served in the American armed forces. After his initial training, and because of his extensive linguistic abilities including seven languages, he was selected to work Army intelligence during the Korean War. He later worked as a translator at the United Nations.

After his service to this country, Mermelstein began to pen his experiences in the Nazi camps in his memoir, "By Bread Alone." In 1960, Mermelstein met his wife, Emma Jane Nance, then a schoolteacher in New York. The couple moved to Los Angeles in 1961 to start their family. Mermelstein set-up and ran a successful manufacturing company that made wooden pallets. He went on to employ generations of workers, including his yard manager that Mermelstein employed for 55 years.

While running a successful business, Mermelstein, deeply scarred and traumatized by his experiences in the Nazi death camps, began traveling back to Auschwitz and other surrounding concentration camps. In 1967, with the advent of the Six-Day War, the conflict between Israel and seven Arab states, Mermelstein was compelled to make sure evidence of what happened to his family and to the millions of other Jews at the hands of the Nazis was not buried or destroyed.

Hearing the rising number of threats being made against Jews and committed to the promise he made to his father, Mermelstein life's work became to ensure that the world would never forget. He spoke to classrooms and school assemblies educating students and teachers of the atrocities he experienced as a teen, warning against man's inhumanity to man. He accompanied students to Auschwitz and spread a message of hope, peace, resilience and reconciliation. His focus was on intellectual curiosity and what can be learned from such a dark period in history. He lives on as an inspiration to many.

In the late 70's Mermelstein actively debated Holocaust deniers on the radio and television. In 1980, a Holocaust denier organization claimed the planned extermination of Jews by the Nazis was a myth and offered a reward publicizing it in Jewish newspapers. Mermelstein was incensed and wrote a letter to the editors of various newspapers who published the advertisement expressing his disgust. The Holocaust denier organization turned its focus to Mermelstein and challenged Mermelstein to prove that Jews were gassed in gas chambers at Auschwitz. The Institute for Historical Review, a known hate group "offered a \$50,000 award to prove Jews were gassed at Auschwitz," recounted William Cox, a Long Beach attorney. Cox was so moved after reading Mermelstein's memoir, "By Bread Alone," he offered to represent Mermelstein to take on the so-called revisionists pro bono.

In 1981, in the Mermelstein v. IHR case, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Thomas T.

Johnson took judicial notice of the fact that Jews were gassed in gas chambers at Auschwitz. The ruling was a "personal vindication" for Mermelstein, his attorney Cox recounted. In 1985, the IHR and Mermelstein reached a settlement agreement, and Mermelstein received a damage award and a letter of apology from the organization. This became the subject of the movie "Never Forget," starring Leonard Nimoy.

Over five decades, Mermelstein returned to Auschwitz and surrounding death camps obtaining artifacts and other items. Mermelstein processed his trauma and pain creating pieces for display in an exhibit which was formerly housed on his business property. Tens of thousands of students toured his exhibit for free over the decades. Currently, Mermelstein's extensive collection of artifacts is being curated for permanent display. Among the physical reminders of the Holocaust he collected are uniforms worn by inmates, pieces of barbed-wire fence and even parts of a Jewish prayer book found buried near an incinerator.

In a collaboration between the Auschwitz Study Foundation (a non-profit founded by Mermelstein in 1978) and the Chabad Jewish Center in Newport Beach—the Orange County Holocaust Education Center will house Mermelstein's collection for access by students, teachers and the public. A documentary based on his life, "Live to Tell" is slated for release later this year.

Mermelstein is survived by his wife, Jane Mermelstein; his children, Bernie, Edie, Ken and David; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DIXIE
CLEM

HON. VAN TAYLOR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor and celebrate the life of Dixie Carolyn Clem.

The youngest of four children, Dixie was born on October 30, 1930, in Booneville, Arkansas. In 1948, she would marry Emmitt Mason Clem, and they would remain firmly united in marriage for 53 years until his passing in 2001.

In 1955, Dixie relocated to Plano, Texas after her husband was appointed the Band Director for Plano High School. Upon settling in the area, Dixie began a lifelong involvement in her beloved Plano community including her membership at First United Methodist Church in Plano, the Plano Chapter Order of Easter Star, Mother Advisor of Plano Rainbow Chamber, Plano Good Sam Travel Club, Past President of Plano Business and Professional Women, and as the first woman to serve on the Plano Planning and Zoning Commission. Dixie also maintained employment with the Plano Star Courier.

Always invested in her community, Mrs. Clem maintained a deep commitment to the Girl Scouts and could oftentimes be seen supporting her husband from the stands at band marching contests and football games. Dixie and Emmitt maintained a passion for travel and were known to spend summers journeying